

for the other merits of the paragraph. If we had done no more good than to suggest the revision of a popular treatment of the subject of building art in a paper of the standing of the *Sheffield Iris*, we should not have laboured in vain; by-and-by builders and building statistics will come to have their proper consideration in all popular vehicles of information as in this.—En.]

### THE MERCHANTS' HOUSE, GLASGOW.

Sir,—I enclose you a notice of the new Merchants' House, Glasgow, which I have extracted from the *Courier* newspaper of that city, a paper distinguished in that quarter for its devotion to architecture, and for its many judicious criticisms thereon.

I may add that much more sculpture is yet to be done before the building is finished. In the frieze already executed there are 195 figures all in alto-relievo, and the frieze in that part of the building appropriated to the Savings' Bank is also to be ornamented in the same style. Mr. Buchanan has been commissioned to embellish the pediment in a style similar to that of our new Royal Exchange, and, among our rising young men, none are more capable of executing the task to the satisfaction of his employers, the public, and his own honour, than Mr. Buchanan; he is well known to many of our London artists, having been a considerable time located amongst them.

I remain, your old friend,

A PRACTICAL MASON.

Pimlico, September 11th.

"This splendid edifice, lately erected in Hutcheson-street, is eighty feet in front, is three stories in height, and forms a centre compartment of a division of Wilson-street, the new County Buildings forming the left wing; and though harmonising in its architecture with these buildings, is more ornate in character, as containing the large hall for the meetings of the wealthy merchants of Glasgow. The first story forms a continuous basement or pedestal, supporting a columnar ordonnance of Grecian-Corinthian columns, flanked by pilasters, having enriched capitals. The frieze is ornamented with sculpture, and the cornice is enriched with dentils and modillions, and a boucresque ornament on the upper member. The parapet is recessed behind the line of the columns, which are in full relief, to make room for a row of vases above each of classic form, and wreathed with flowers. Breadth and simplicity of effect has been studied, the windows not being enriched, save by plain pilasters—the only ornament on the general surface being a simple wreath on the dado of the windows. The example from which it is taken is that elegant Ionic Grecian temple the Choric monument of Lycimachus—the columns not being attached as in the example—and the capitals reduced something in their height. The pilasters and capitals are a combination from the vestibules of the large temple at Eleusis, and the capitals of the Choric monument, the acanthus leaves and hawk's-beak, with expanded wings, supporting the abacus, being from the Eleusian temple, and the helix and flowing tendrils from the Choric monument. This is the only modern specimen which we have seen of this beautiful order executed on so large a scale, with the exception of the two columns at the entrance to Exeter Hall, and it is a triumphant proof of the superiority of this order as practised in Greece over the Roman—the one being easy, flowery, and graceful; the other stiff, exuberant, and formal." (See the capitals of the Exchange, which are from the best Roman example.) The sculptures on the frieze are carved in stone. The centre figure represents Neptune, with his trident, seated behind his sunny couriers; to the right and left of the monarch of the deep are two groups, the one allegorical of a large river—the Clyde, of course—the other the shipping and manufacturing interest—being a boat in which are seated three cotton bolls, with sails, it is to be presumed, of the same material. The other figures are illustrative of active traffic over the globe; the elephant and lions speak of climes which pour forth their treasures to the enterprising merchant. Some of the figures are engaged in friendly intercourse—one points to a globe. These speak of the effects of commerce in promoting amity and advancing science. At one extremity is the allegorical representation of home, beside which is a group of girls strewing flowers to welcome the return of the travellers, &c. &c. But as the sculptures on this frieze are chiefly adaptations from the works of Plaxman and Thorwaldsen, it does not pretend to that unity of design which might have been expected had it been an entirely new composition. The execution is very able and spirited, and does great credit to the artist, Mr.

Buchan of this city; and we hope the example here set will be followed in future public buildings, as no ornament can be more appropriate for the decoration of flat surfaces, or be so healthily keeping with the chaste simplicity of Grecian architecture.—Flowers or foliage may give a character of richness to a building, but they never can inspire sentiment or feeling; and in a city like this, already so distinguished for the extent and variety of its public buildings, it is scarcely creditable that an art so elevating, and which calls forth a thousand pleasing associations, should be allowed to languish. The internal accommodation of the Merchants' House embraces—besides the large hall and rooms for the secretary and directors—the National Security Savings' Bank and two counting-houses. The Savings' Bank, which is now occupied, is large and commodious, the telling-room being the whole depth of the building. It is divided into two compartments, by an open curtain screen, composed of columns and pilasters, the capitals of which are to be at a novelty, and are exceedingly chaste and beautiful. The whole arrangement of the ceiling and walls, which are paneled, and corresponding with each other, seem to be exceedingly happy. The ornaments are few, but judiciously disposed—having altogether a degree of simple elegance which we have not seen equalled. The principal entrance, which is in the centre of the building, opens into a corridor 10 or 12 feet wide, to the sides of which are attached a range of pilasters, resting on a continuous basement of Atrian stone. The walls and ceiling are designed in harmony with each other, the mouldings having a fine breadth and simplicity, in keeping with the external architecture, at the termination of the corridor, is the principal staircase, which leads to the large hall; two massive pedestals are placed on either flank as you ascend (which, we believe, are to receive sculptured groups); leading off the first landing is the Directors' Room, a fine apartment, having a highly decorative frieze and ceiling, the spaces in the ceiling are filled with flowing tracery, which is finely brought out and relieved with colour. From this leading to the ceiling the staircase assumes a more imposing character; the walls, ceiling, and dome are united and blended in fine harmony; the dome is, in our estimation, the most successful thing we have seen; the light is so introduced as to produce a fine aerial effect, without the eye being able to detect from whence it cometh. An opportunity is here offered, perhaps intended, for fine pictorial illusion or sculptural effect, which should not be lost, and we have no doubt will be taken advantage of by the magnificent projectors of this building. We now come to the hall. The length of this room is 76 feet, its breadth 36, and the height of ceiling in proportion. We should, perhaps, say nothing on the design of this truly magnificent and finely-proportioned room, as the finishings are not quite completed. Of the ceiling, however, we may say a few words—and here the architects seem to have given the rein to their imagination, and to have lavished that ornament with a profuse hand, which they seem to have held in check in the approaches to this, the great object of their efforts—the *ultima* *thule* of the design. A coze, one-fifth of the height, surrounds the room, springing from a highly-enriched Corinthian cornice—the flat part of the ceiling forming one immense panel, which is again divided into a variety of pleasing geometric forms. Three large panels, set in deep frames, highly enriched, and of elegant design, range along the centre; these again are surrounded with a variety of smaller panels, filled with bones and flowing tracery; the larger beams have bold pendants at their intersection; and the smaller ones, surrounding the larger panels, are enriched with a beautiful running ornament, and have rich ribs at their intersection; *enla firma*, of chaste design, are placed on the cornice at the springing of the ribs, and the spaces between these are paneled and enriched with carved mouldings. Besides its other embellishments, it is intended, we have been informed, to place the statue of the late Kirkman Finlay, Esq., for which a liberal public subscription has already been made, in this magnificent hall, and we can hardly conceive of a more appropriate situation. In conclusion, we have only further to remark, that the architects of the building, Messrs. Clarke and Bell, Buchanan-street, have earned the possession, in a high degree, of a sound judgment and a cultivated taste, both in the external and internal decorations; and, so far as we have heard, the edifice altogether is regarded with almost unmingled admiration. To the members of the Merchants' House, as well as the architects, this must prove highly gratifying; and to the latter, who are young men, we believe, it cannot fail to be highly useful as their future professional career.

Sufficient funds have been obtained to erect a monument to the late heroine of the Fern Islands, in the church or churchyard of Banburgh, the resting-place of her mortal remains.

### CURVES OF FANCY EQUATED.

